

Message Text

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17

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 OMB-01

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SAM-01 EUR-12 SCA-01

CPR-01 /077 W

----- 021767

O R 060640Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8579

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 5374

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BG

SUBJ: INSTALLATION OF NEW PRESIDENT OF BANGLADESH

1. AGAINST THE BACKGROUND DESCRIBED BELOW, I ATTENDED THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY FOR BANGLADESH'S NEW PRESIDENT, CHIEF JUSTICE A. M. SAYEM, AT BANGABHABAN AT 1030 THIS MORNING. I SHOOK HANDS WITH THE NEW PRESIDENT AT TEA FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY BUT WE HAD NO CONVERSATION.

2. AT 0945, MY OFFICE RECEIVED A TELEPHONED INVITATION FROM THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL TO BE AT BANGABHABAN AT 1010 TO ATTEND THE NEW PRESIDENT'S INSTALLATION CEREMONY. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER SMALLMAN AND I MET IN MY OFFICE IMMEDIATELY TO REACH DECISION WHETHER TO ATTEND OR NOT. BOTH OF US FELT THAT PROBABLY NO LEGAL QUESTION ABOUT THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE SUCCESSION WAS RAISED. WE ALSO FELT, THAT IT WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO BE GIVEN FIFTEEN MINUTES ADVANCE NOTICE WHICH WOULD NOT ALLOW EITHER OF US OR OUR GOVERNMENTS ADEQUATE TIME TO STUDY THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND DECIDED THAT WE WOULD NOT ATTEND, GIVING AS OUR REASON, IF ASKED, THAT
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WE HAD NOT RECEIVED THE INVITATION IN TIME TO PERMIT OUR

ATTENDANCE. HOWEVER, AFTER A QUICK TELEPHONE SURVEY AMONG OUR WESTERN COLLEGGUES SHOWED THAT VIRTUALLY ALL, IF NOT ALL, PLANNED TO ATTEND -- SOME ON THE BASIS THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS' RECOGNIZED STATES AND NOT GOVERNMENTS -- SMALLMAN CHANGED HIS MIND AND CONCLUDED THAT HE WOULD BE BETTER ADVISED TO ATTEND RATHER THAN ACCEPT THE ONUS OF APPEARING TO HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE NEW GOVERNMENT. HE FELT THAT THIS CONSIDERATION WAS THE STRONGER SINCE ALLEGATIONS WERE BEGINNING TO CIRCULATE IN DACCA THAT THE AMERICANS AND BRITISH WERE SOMEHOW INVOLVED WITH MAJORS AND HAD COOPERATED IN THEIR "ESCAPE" FROM DACCA.

3. WITH THE BRITISH ALSO ATTENDING, I DECIDED THAT MY BEST COURSE WAS TO FOLLOW SUIT. TO HAVE BEEN THE ONLY AMBASSADOR ABSENT FROM THE CEREMONY MIGHT HAVE FED FURTHER THE REPORTS OF OUR INVOLVEMENT AND IDENTIFICATION WITH THE PREVIOUS REGIME AND THE MAJORS WHICH HAVE ALREADY LED TO APPEARANCE OF SLOGANS HERE CALLING FOR MY REMOVAL FROM BANGLADESH AND WORSE (SEE SEPTTEL ABOUT PROCESSION HERE LAST NIGHT). AS IT TURNED OUT, IT SEEMED TO ME THAT ALL OF THE CHIEFS OF MISSION WERE PRESENT, MANY OF THEM OUTRAGED BY THE DISCOURTESY OF THE LAST-MINUTE INVITATION, AND THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER ATTIRED IN THE BUSH SHIRT HE MUST HAVE BEEN WEARING WHEN HE GOT HIS INVITATION.
BOSTER

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